(b) The information is being collected from the State Government.

(c) and (d) The enquiry committee has been constituted by the State Government. The Committee is yet to give its findings.

[English]

Task Force for Redressal of Public Grievances

1649. SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN :
DR. LAXMINARAYAN PANDEY :

Will the Minister of CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether all the Ministries and Departments of the Union Government have been directed to constitute a task force comprising of officials and representatives from the consumer groups to evolve a comprehensive charter for the redressal of public grievances and improved public satisfaction;

(b) if so, the details of the guidelines issued by the Union Government in this regard;

(c) the present position in regard to the constitution of the task force; and

(d) the time by which the task force is likely to start functioning ?

THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (d) As part of the Government's pursuit of Effective and Responsive Administration at all levels, various Ministries/Departments have been asked to set up Task Forces for introduction, in a phased manner, of the concept of Citizens' Charter. The Charter incorporates essentially citizens' entitlement to public services, wide publicity of standards of performance, quality of services, access to information, simplified procedures of complaints, time-bound redressal of grievances and provision for independent scrutiny of performance. A number of Ministries/Departments have constituted Task Forces for evolving their respective Charters since January, 1997. Initially, Ministries/ Departments with a large public interface have been identified for introducing the concept. The Task Forces are functioning in many of these Ministries and some of them have completed the task of preparing a Draft Charter. The Charters also incorporate a visible machinery for public grievance redressal and information to the public.

Krishi Vigyan Kendras

1650. DR. ASIM BALA :
SHRI K.D. SULTANPURI :
SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE :
SHRI N.J. RATHWA :

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the norms fixed by the Government for opening of Krishi Vigyan Kendras in the country;

(b) the plan chalked out by the Government to open Krishi Vigyan Kendras in each district of the country; and

(c) the expected time limit fixed to achieve the goal ?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (EXCLUDING THE DEPARTMENT OF ANIMAL HUSBANDRY AND DAIRYING) (SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA) : (a) The norms fixed by the Govt. includes availability of 50 acres of representatives cultivable land in one stretch located as far as possible in central part of the districts, some civic facilities, adequate technical backstopping from the host institution and acceptance of funding pattern.

(b) and (c) A comprehensive plan has been chalked out and taken up with the Planning Commission which covers upgradation of existing Farmers Training Centres and Zonal Research Stations to take up the functions of KVKs, besides establishment of new KVKs in the remaining districts in phases during 9th Five Year Plan.

Forest Protection Force

1651. SHRI BADAL CHOUDHURY : Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state :

(a) the states facilitated by the Central Government to raise Forest Protection Force;

(b) whether the smugglers are destroying the forests of the North Eastern Regions immensely;

(c) if so, whether the Government of Tripura has submitted a proposal to raise a battalion of the Forest Protection Force; and

(d) if so, the steps taken by the Government to accord sanction to the proposal and to protect the forests of the North-Eastern regions ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (PROF. SAIFUDDIN SOZ): (a) A centrally sponsored scheme "Development of Infrastructure for Protection of Forest against Biotic Interference" under Seventh Five Year Plan, had been transferred to state seetor, as per decision taken by the National Development Council. At present, no assistance is provided to States by the Central Government to raise forest protection forces.

(b) The Central Government are aware of the decrease in forest cover in north-eastern region of the Country. As per the State of Forest Report 1995, prepared by the Forest Survey of India, forest cover in north-eastern region decreased by 783 sq. km. as compared with that in 1993. The Union Government has directed to States and Union Territories to make an indepth analysis of factors contributing to depletion of forest cover and make all out efforts to step up afforestation programmes.

(c) Yes, Sir.